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Venezuela: Communist Leader Comments on Coup Attempt

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1447 GMT 4 Feb 92

[Interview with Trino Melean, deputy and secretary general of the Communist Party of Venezuela, at the Venezolana studios, by unidentified reporter -- live or recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] Good morning and welcome to our studios.

[Melean] Thank you for this invitation. I am here together with Dr. Pedro Ortega Diaz, president of the Communist Party of Venezuela [PCV], and Deputy Ricardo Gutierrez to comment on the latest developments that have shook the country.

As is public knowledge, we all knew this coup was coming. You journalists know this very well. I believe this is part of the political crisis, the institutional crisis, of the country.

Right now, it is very easy to condemn the coup, particularly a coup that apparently has failed. We had previously announced our stand with regard to coups as a mechanism to resolve the great problems that afflict the country. We defend the institutions, and we have greatly contributed in a very powerful manner to consolidating this democracy.

We have strong criticism to offer because this democracy that boasted that it is strong and respectable, is not. It is much less a social democracy. We strongly criticize this democracy, but we believe that there are means for changing this democracy and we want to change it for the benefit of the vast majority of the country.

We are aware of how past governments have ruled for the benefit of a minority, and this cannot continue. This has to be changed, and the entire nation needs credibility with regard to the possibilities and development of democracy. We, the communists, believe that this military action against the Constitution is a desperate action as a result of the serious crisis the country is experiencing.

We are here to reaffirm our credibility in democracy and our firm determination to struggle for the solution of the big problems that affect the vast majority of Venezuelans.

[Reporter] Yes, it is definitely important to maintain this democracy that allows us all to express ourselves freely.

[Melean] We believe that it is necessary to maintain this

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democracy, but we must develop it and improve it. Millions of words have been said and thousands of pages have been written about the transformation and reorganization of the Venezuelan state. I believe that the Presidential Committee To Reform the State has done a tremendous job, but these are just mere illusions of a group of Venezuelans because this is a corrupt, squandering, and inefficient democracy. We believe this democracy must be thoroughly transformed if we want to strengthen it, uphold it, and really change and develop the country.

[Reporter] We thank Trino Melean, deputy and secretary general of the PCV, for coming to our studios.

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